

Transportation Alliance for New Solutions Program

The Transportation Alliance for New Solutions (TrANS) program is in its 9th year as a jobs partnership program operating in Southeast, South Central, and most recently in Central and North Central Wisconsin. TrANS is a public-private model for collaboration and success for preparing the underemployed with skills needed to gain access to the road-building industry as laborers and apprentices. TrANS demonstrates how the public and private sectors can work together to address the outreach, preparation, placement, and retention of women, minorities, and others in the highway construction skilled trades. TrANS is an industry driven plan produced from the ground up by major industry and labor organizations, community based service providers and government.

There are over 20 partners, including: the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association (WTBA); National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC); Wisconsin Women's Council; and the Wisconsin Laborers' District Council. Community-based organizations provide services to screen, orient, and prepare people for employment as laborers in the road building industry through outreach, marketing, screening, and industry awareness programs.

The intent of TrANS is to provide full time employment for the best laborers and help them progress into apprenticeships in the highway construction skilled trades. TrANS participants undergo an intensive 120-hour soft and hard skills preparation program that utilizes industry professionals. A variety of topics are covered including those in the table that follows.

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| • physical conditioning | • job site safety issues |
| • tool identification/usage | • map reading terminology |
| • construction terminology | • CDL training |
| • construction math | • hands on projects |
| • apprenticeship opportunities | • work ethics |

The TrANS staff works closely with potential employers to identify their labor needs and tailor their classroom instruction to help prepare potential employees to be placed in jobs offered by the contractors. Classes of 15-20 candidates in size raise preparation quality. After placement, TrANS continues its work with employers and their new hires to ensure job success and job retention. The program also helps remove barriers to success by providing backup or temporary assistance for child care and transportation alternatives to its participants.

TrANS has come a long way since its inception, and has won grants and awards. In excess of 400 people have been placed in family supporting positions as laborers in the industry. Not only does TrANS address the underutilization of and provide preparation and employment opportunities to women and minorities, but it also saves contractors time and money on screening and job preparation costs of potential employees. Well over 100 contractors have hired TrANS graduates. This program is a perfect example of how the public and private sectors can come together to help people become independent and self-sufficient, while at the same time, providing contractors with skilled labor to fill their vacant positions. TrANS has evolved from early consortium development, to leadership for planning, expansion, work group management, and fostering relationships and collaboration. The placement history of TrANS is contained in the bulleted items.

- The TrANS pilot program began in 1995. Forty men and women were trained and placed by the program in that year. Ethnically they were African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans.
- In 1996, the second year of the program, 41 new placements were made in addition to 10 rehires from 1995.
- In 1997, 57 new placements were made in addition to 34 rehires from 1995 and 1996. For the period 1995-97, an estimated 25% of placements received their commercial driver's licenses.

During that timeframe, six TrANS graduates progressed to operating engineer apprentices, two became cement finisher apprentices, and one each became a pre-apprentice cement mason, a crew leader, and a foreman.

- In 1998, there were 54 new placements, and 16 rehires among a wider base of contractors. Among these 1998 TrANS graduates, 16 (20%) have their commercial driver's licenses and four TrANS graduates have progressed to operating engineer apprenticeships; two have progressed to cement finisher apprenticeships; and six have reached leadership/supervisory positions.
- In 1999, the Milwaukee site had 55 new hires and Madison had 12.
- In 2000, Milwaukee placed 61 new hires, and Madison placed 19. Three new TrANS operators were added in 2000. They are located in Wausau, Beloit, and Antigo. The Wausau site placed four TrANS participants in 2000, Antigo placed 21, and Beloit placed two. The program placed a total of 107 participants during 2000. In addition, the Milwaukee site placed 16 participants who were rehires. The Madison site had eight rehires and Antigo six rehires during the same period.
- In 2001, 56 new hires occurred in southeast Wisconsin and 21 in south-central Wisconsin. During this period, all TrANS operators reported rehires from the previous construction season. In addition, Milwaukee reported two participants placed in apprenticeships.
- In 2002, TrANS placed 58 new hires in Milwaukee; and 23 in Madison; 10 in Antigo; 10 in Rock County and 11 in College of Menominee Nation. TrANS placed a combined total of 112 from all five locations. These numbers do not include numerous rehires and other advancements.
- In 2003, combining placements for the five TrANS locations 67 were placed in Milwaukee; 19 placements in Madison/Rock County; Rhinelander (Mole Lake) placed 14; and College of Menominee Nation placed 7; The combined total placements were 107 throughout Wisconsin.

During this period, TrANS operators reported rehires from the previous construction season at 89.

The following representatives from industry and labor, government agencies, and community-based organizations constitute a majority of WisDOT partners that share the goals and values of the TrANS program.

- Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association, and Participating Contractors
- Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin
- National Association of Minority Contractors - Wisconsin Chapter
- Wisconsin Laborers' District Council
- Wisconsin Operating Engineers
- YWCA of Greater Milwaukee
- YWCA of Greater Madison
- Urban League of Greater Madison
- LaCausa
- Esperanza Unida
- Milwaukee-Area American Indian Manpower Council
- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee
- Rock County OIC
- Mole Lake & Lac Du Flambeau
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Wisconsin Women's Council
- Wisconsin Technical College System
- Federal Highway Administration
- College of Menominee Nation